

Media Workshop on enhanced dissemination of seasonal climate forecasts in Burundi 5-6 December 2003

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Executive Summary

From December 5th to December 6th 2002, journalists from both public and private media in Burundi met in Bujumbura in a capacity building workshop on enhanced dissemination of seasonal climate forecasts. They listened with great interest to various presentations made by meteorology experts and users from the media, the health, energy, early warning and agriculture sectors.

The aim of the workshop was to sensitise journalists and all the media leaders on problems related to treatment and dissemination of climate information and seasonal forecasts likely to have an impact on man's life and socio-economic activities.

After tackling and discussing the organisation and functioning of the IGEBU Burundi National Meteorological service, and after discussions on various and rich presentations on seasonal forecasts, explanation of usual jargon in meteorology challenges facing the media in dissemination of seasonal forecasts to users, participants to the workshop made a series of recommendations.

1.0 Introduction

It has been noticed that the media in Burundi have got very little interest in meteorological information. The lack of interest is due to the probabilistic nature of such information and the difficult technical language used. This workshop was therefore organised to improve the media's interest by building capacity of journalists from different media houses in Burundi in the dissemination of seasonal meteorological forecasts. It was an occasion to form a ground of interaction between the media and climate experts in Burundi along with user experts from the energy, the agriculture the health and early warning sectors. It was held under the auspices of the Drought Monitoring Centre-Nairobi (DMCN) and the Burundi Meteorological Service IGEBU though the financial support came from NOAA/OGP. The project's aim was to sensitise and create awareness on the use of seasonal meteorological forecasts to the user community in Burundi. Presentations were made in French, which is the official language in Burundi.

1.1. Project objectives

The major objectives of the project included:

- Raise media professionals' interest in meteorological seasonal forecasts and climate outlook products.
- Build capacity of journalists in understanding the climate forecasts to be able to disseminate them to the user community in an easily understandable language.
- Create a ground of interaction between Burundi's meteorological scientists and the media people for a better future collaboration.

1.2 Method

The project consisted of conducting a two day-workshop for media professionals from print and electronic media in Burundi in order to let them exchange views with meteorological experts on

meteorological forecasts and how they affect different sectors of life. Experts made presentations from the Burundi Meteorological Service IGEBU, the media, health, agriculture, energy and early warning sectors who had attended climate outlook forums Chaco's. Items developed were chosen to march with the objectives of the project and presenters were able to transmit the knowledge they had and which had been enriched by what they got from CHACOFs meetings. Those topics of presentations were regrouped in two categories. The group of 6 scientific topics came first and was followed by teamwork on questions related to main issues raised in the preceding presentations. After the teamwork, a plenary session was held to let participants from different teams put together their answers.

The second group of presentations was made of five topics from the user experts. After their presentations, other team works were made like in the preceding case.

It was an occasion for the media people to actively express their views about learnt issues from the presentations.

List of paper presented

1. The meteorology issue and Perspectives (Cyprien HAKIZIMANA)
2. Acquainting with usual terms in meteorological and climatology (Maurice SHIRAMANGA)
3. Relationship between Oceanic Phenomena and climate and Related Extreme Climate Events (Maurice SHIRAMANGA)
4. Climatology of Burundi and Seasonal Forecasts (Ruben BARAKIZA)
5. Meteorological information and Disaster Management (Gérard MADODO)
6. Application of Meteorological information to the Health sector (Dr Bonaventure BAZIRUTWABO)
7. Application of Seasonal Forecasts to Agriculture (Pegaz BANYANKIYE)
8. Role of the media in dissemination of Meteorological information (Anselme KATIYUNGURUZA)
9. Media's challenges in dissemination of meteorological seasonal forecasts (Marie Goretti MUHITIRA)
10. Use of seasonal forecasts in management of hydropower (Augustin BARUVURA)
11. Needs for interaction in networks for better dissemination of climate information (Marie Claire NZEYIMANA)

1.3 Results

- Almost all the radio stations working in Burundi were represented at the workshop by journalists they chose themselves and all newspapers and agencies both private and state-run ones were represented. The national television was represented as well.
- The workshop was disseminated in all the radio station, the television and in the newspapers and agencies working in the country.

1.4 Lessons Learnt

- Recommendations to the media to be interested in dissemination of meteorological seasonal forecasts and climate information were drawn by the participants who agreed to interact in a network for future better dissemination.
- Several interviews were led by the journalist attending the workshop on the different presentations and were disseminated afterwards in the media organizations.
- Scientists from the Burundi Meteorological Service IGEBU agreed to break the gap between them and the media people for a better dissemination of meteorological forecasts. They agreed

also to avail the information whenever requested by the media and to give it in an easily understandable language.

1.5 Conclusion

The project has achieved its goal of raising interest of the media people in meteorological seasonal forecasts and got commitment from the participants to form a network for better dissemination of meteorological forecasts.

1.6 Recommendation

- The media were urged to be more interested in meteorological information to help prevent and protect against disasters.
- Sensitise media managers on the necessity to include meteorological information in their usual broadcast news.
- An association of national journalists in charge of dissemination of climate information needs being supported.
- Meteorological people and the media need creating a means of permanent contact.
- The National Meteorological Service IGEBU should promote a communication policy and give meteorological information to the media in a language easy to understand.
- Create a strong partnership between the National Meteorological service and the media for a better comprehension in order to disseminate meteorological information.
- Set up early warning systems to limit the number of disaster victims.